JONATHAN HICKMAN
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#1

NEW AVENGERS®

MIKE DEODATO JR.

ALL-NEW MARVEL NOW!

016. NOW

PREVIOUSLY IN NEW AVENGERS

EVERYTHING DIES. YOU. ME. EVERYONE ON THIS PLANET. IT'S INEVITABLE, AND I HAVE COME TO ACCEPT IT. WHAT I FIND ***UNACCEPTABLE*** IS THE UNNATURAL ACCELERATION OF THAT END.

ON AN ALTERNATE EARTH AN EVENT OCCURRED THAT CAUSED THE EARLY DEATH OF A UNIVERSE. THIS CAUSED A TINY CONTRACTION, SMASHING TWO UNIVERSES TOGETHER AT THE INCURSION POINT OF THE INITIAL EVENT.

"EACH INCURSION LASTS EIGHT HOURS, AFTER WHICH EITHER BOTH WORLDS ARE DESTROYED, OR ONLY ONE EARTH IS SACRIFICED, SPARING BOTH UNIVERSES.

"WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO DETECT THE INCURSIONS SO WE'LL KNOW WHEN ONE IS COMING. HOWEVER...

"INFINITE WORLDS, INFINITE OUTCOMES. IF THIS COULD EASILY BE STOPPED, IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN STOPPED."

BLACK SWAN. I'M TOLD YOU JUMPED HERE FROM ANOTHER WORLD...THAT YOU HAD SOME KIND OF DEVICE, AND THEN YOU DESTROYED THE PLANET.

THE TURN OF THE WHEEL BREAKS HOPE--IT CRUSHES WHAT MAKES US DECENT AND STEALS WHAT LITTLE HONOR REMAINS.

YOU WILL NEED THE MIRROR FOR ANY NUMBER OF INEVITABLE ADVERSARIES, BUT YOU SHOULD PRIMARILY CONCERN YOURSELVES WITH THE BLACK PRIESTS.

ALL INCURSIONS HAVE THE SAME PARAMETERS AND CAN BE FOUND AND OBSERVED THROUGH A PROCESS. I CAN BUILD IT. I'VE ACTUALLY BUILT ONE BEFORE. WHAT SHE CALLS A MIRROR, I CALLED THE BRIDGE.

YOU UNDERSTAND. IF YOU USE THE MIRROR AND FOCUS YOUR NEEDS...

"...YOU CAN OBSERVE OTHER INCURSIONS AS THEY ARE OCCURRING."

THAT WAS YOUR LAST CHANCE, STARK.

CRACK

SO...WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT THIS?

RABUM ALAL IS COMING FOR ***EVERYTHING***. AND WHEN YOU UNDERSTAND, YOU'LL KNOW THAT I WAS RIGHT AND YOU WERE WRONG.

THEN YOU WILL DIE THINKING OF ME... WHO WILL BE SO VERY LONG GONE.

THE ILLUMINATI

BLACK BOLT
Celestial Messiah

NAMOR
Imperius Rex

REED RICHARDS
Universal Builder

IRON MAN
Master of Machines

BEAST
Mutant Genius

DOCTOR STRANGE
Sorcerer Supreme

BLACK PANTHER
King of the Dead

“A PERFECT WORLD”

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WAKANDA.
THE NECROPOLIS.

"RECORD."

CATALOGING...

TIME STAMP: 12:02:12:089. OBSERVED INCURSION CLAIMS BOTH WORLDS.

UPON CLOSER EXAMINATION, THE DETONATION TIMES OF BOTH PLANETS DOES NOT SEEM SIMULTANEOUS.

RECOMMEND UPGRADING DATA SPHERES TO RECORD ALL FUTURE EVENTS AT 12,000 FRAMES PER SECOND. FURTHER INVESTIGATION IS...

→SNIFF←

PAUSE RECORDING.

IS THERE SOMETHING YOU WANT?

I'M NOT SURPRISED TO SEE THE GREAT MEN HAVE BUILT YET ANOTHER GREAT MACHINE. I ***WAS***, HOWEVER, SURPRISED TO HEAR RUMORS OF ***THE BIRD*** BEING PUT BACK IN HER CAGE.

IS IT TRUE?

YOU'VE TALKED TO REED.

I HAVE. HE SAID YOU DID IT BECAUSE YOU SAW THE BLACK SWAN DOING ***EVIL THINGS*** ON ***ALIEN WORLDS***--HER SERVING HER MASTER, A TRUE DEVOTED NIHILIST.

YOU LEARNED THIS FROM THE MACHINE?

YES...

THE BRIDGE MINES OTHER REALITIES.

WE CAN USE IT TO SEE WHAT HAS HAPPENED ON OTHER WORLDS. TIME IS SOMEWHAT VARIABLE... WHICH IS HOW WE SAW WHO, AND ***WHAT***, SHE REALLY IS.

THE ABILITY NOT JUST TO SEE WHAT SOMEONE HAS ***DONE***, BUT ALL THE POSSIBILITIES OF WHAT THEY ***MIGHT*** HAVE DONE. A TRUE ACCOUNTING OF ONE'S POTENTIAL.

WHAT A WONDER...

TELL ME, T'CHALLA, HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO RESIST CHECKING TO SEE ON HOW MANY EARTHS YOU STILL RULE YOUR PEOPLE?

WOULD YOU CARE TO SEE ON HOW ***FEW*** YOU STILL RULE YOURS, NAMOR?

SO YOU LOOK FOR HOPE, THEN...IN THE HOPELESS?

I'M LOOKING FOR SEVERAL THINGS: MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OUR POTENTIAL ADVERSARIES, ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF WHAT WE'VE LEARNED FROM THE SWAN...

I'M ALSO TRYING TO FIND SOME WAY TO AVOID, OR DELAY, AN INCURSION.

YES. LIKE I SAID, *HOPING*... POINTLESS FINALITY TRAPPED IN AN EVEN *MORE* POINTLESS WEB.

WATCHING THE SAME THING HAPPEN OVER AND OVER.

EVERYTHING DYING...AND ALL THAT.

NOT QUITE. SO FAR I'VE CATALOGED THE DEATHS OF ALMOST FORTY WORLDS.

A SHOCKING MAJORITY OF INCURSIONS OCCUR UNOPPOSED. I'VE SEEN THIRTY EARTHS, AND THEIR ACCOMPANYING UNIVERSES, DESTROYED WITHOUT INTERFERENCE OF ANY KIND.

"I HAVE SEEN *THE MAPMAKERS* AND THEIR MINIONS DEVOUR FIVE OTHERS.

"TWO HAVE FALLEN TO *THE BLACK PRIESTS*."

HOWEVER...

THERE IS ONE WORLD I HAVE RECORDED THAT HAS SURVIVED TWO INCURSIONS IN WAYS DIFFERENT THAN OUR OWN.

THEY'VE FOUND SOME NEW, MORE CREATIVE WAY TO DESTROY A WORLD?

SOMETHING USEFUL?

NO. THIS WAS... DIFFERENT.

SHOW ME.

"THE GREAT SOCIETY WAS FORMED FOUR YEARS AGO AFTER *ARCHETYPES OF J.U.S.T.I.C.E.* FELL DURING *THE INVASION.*

"SIX HEROES OF *THE ANTI-HEROIC AGE*, THE SOCIETY--OUTCASTS ALL--BANDED TOGETHER TO REPEL THE MAD SCIENCE OF *THE XENO-GENETICISTS.*

"MEN WERE NOT MEANT TO BE REMADE BY ALIEN GODS, AND WHEN THOSE GODS WERE CAST OUT, THE AGE OF J.U.S.T.I.C.E. HAD ENDED AND THE GREAT SOCIETY HAD BEGUN.

"THEY SAVED THE WORLD AND WERE LIFTED UP AS SAVIORS.

"THEIR HOME WAS A TEMPLE-- A MONUMENT ERECTED FOR *THE SCIENCE GAMES.*

"A TOWER POINTING TO THE STARS, AND POSSIBLY SOMETHING BEYOND EVEN THAT.

"THEY WERE THE GREATEST HEROES THEIR WORLD HAD EVER SEEN.

"THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN ENOUGH."

I NEVER WOULD'VE EXPECTED TO SEE *YOU* HERE...

...IS SOMETHING WRONG, SUN GOD?

THE NORN HAS HAD A VISION.

WE'VE BEEN CALLED TO THE TOWER.

OKAY.

JUST ONE MORE AND THEN I'M FINISHED.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO KEEP DOING THIS, WAYNE.

YOU'RE WRONG, ZORAN.

YOU DID WHAT YOU COULD-- DID EVERYTHING THAT WAS *POSSIBLE*.

OVER ONE HUNDRED PEOPLE DIED HERE. MOTHERS AND SONS. FATHERS AND DAUGHTERS...ALL BECAUSE I FAILED.

WHO CARES IF I DID EVERYTHING I COULD?

IT WASN'T *ENOUGH.*

THEY EXPECT US TO BE BETTER THAN WHAT'S POSSIBLE.

I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT I REMEMBER THAT.

UNDERSTAND?

THE TOWER.

THE FORCES OF ORDER ARE IN *CHAOS.*

THE WORLD *ONCE AGAIN* IS IN... ALIGNMENT.

SO... INCURSION.

ANOTHER ONE.

I HAVE CHECKED THE ORBS. ALL THE SPHERES REMAIN UNFAZED EXCEPT THIS ONE.

UNLESS WE FALL.

THEN ALL THE SPHERES WILL SHATTER.

IT'S CONSISTENT. THE SAME EVERY TIME. I CAN FEEL THE HARMONICS FROM HERE...

PITCH AND FREQUENCY INCREASE.

THERE WILL BE MORE...AND SOON.

THEN WE'LL HAVE TO KEEP DOING WHAT WE'RE DOING...

AND DO IT UNTIL WE DIE.

NO.

EVERYTHING LIVES.

IT LIVES BEFORE IT DIES, AND WE ARE JUDGED BY WHAT WE DO DURING THAT TIME.

LIKE A BRILLIANT, LIFE-GIVING STAR, WE ILLUMINATE THE UNIVERSE, CHASING AWAY THE SHADOWS. WE CREATE LIFE AND THEN CELEBRATE THAT CREATION.

THIS IS SIMPLY HOW THINGS ARE.

IT CANNOT BE CONTAINED.

IT NEVER WILL.

DOCTOR SPECTRUM
THE RIDER
THE JOVIAN
BOUNDLESS
THE NORN
SUN GOD
SO WE WILL NOT TOLERATE--WE WILL NOT *ACCEPT*-- THE UNNATURAL OCCURRENCE OF AN EARLY END.
WHICH IS WHY I HAVE SUMMONED YOU HERE...
TO BEAT BACK THE NIGHT...AND TO CONQUER DEATH.
EARTH-4,290,001.

WE'VE FOUND A WAY EACH TIME.

PUSH THE WORLD BACK THROUGH. MOVE A PLANET THROUGH TIME-- FRACTURING AND THEN RESEALING THE BREACH...

WE ARE ONLY LIMITED BY OURSELVES. WE WILL FIND YET ANOTHER WAY.

BECAUSE OUR REAL ENEMY... IS FEAR.

FEAR THAT WE WILL FAIL. FEAR THAT THESE EVENTS WILL FORCE US TO BECOME SOMETHING LESS THAN WHAT WE ARE.

BELIEVE IN EACH OTHER.

WE WILL FIND A WAY.

ARE YOU WITH ME?

DO YOU EVEN HAVE TO ASK?

THE HINTERLANDS OF THE EGYPTIAN EMPIRE.

THE WALL MUST BE CLOSE.

IT'S HERE. I CAN FEEL IT.

YEAH. FOUND IT.

READY?

YES. LET'S GO.

THERE...

BLUE INCURSION MEANS *SIDERA MARIS.*

A BROKEN WORLD TO MARK TERRITORY FOR THE MAPMAKERS.

DEFEAT THEM BEFORE THEY CAN SUMMON THEIR MASTERS.

LEAVE THE *WORLD* ITSELF FOR THE NORN.

SECOND MAPPED WORLD IN THE LAST TWO WEEKS, NORN...

I'M SORRY THERE HASN'T BEEN MORE TIME BETWEEN THEM.

THEY ARE A *VIRUS*, RIDER.

A SELF-REPLICATING DISEASE MEANT TO DESTROY THE GREATER MULTIVERSAL HUMAN CULTURE.

SO I DO WHAT I MUST.

THAT'S THE LAST OF THEM.

ALL THAT'S LEFT IS THE ANCHOR PLANET, THIS SHELL OF AN EARTH.

NORN, YOU ALMOST COULDN'T CONTAIN IT LAST TIME...WILL YOU BE STRONG ENOUGH?

I HAVE TO BE. AND I ***BORROW LIVES*** BECAUSE THIS CANNOT BE DONE BY ***ONE*** PERSON...

GOD, I HATE THIS.

THAT'S NOT HOW *THE WORDS OF POWER* WORK.

THEY CANNOT BE USED BY A SINGLE MAN...

SO I ENDURE THE COST.

HRRNNNNN!

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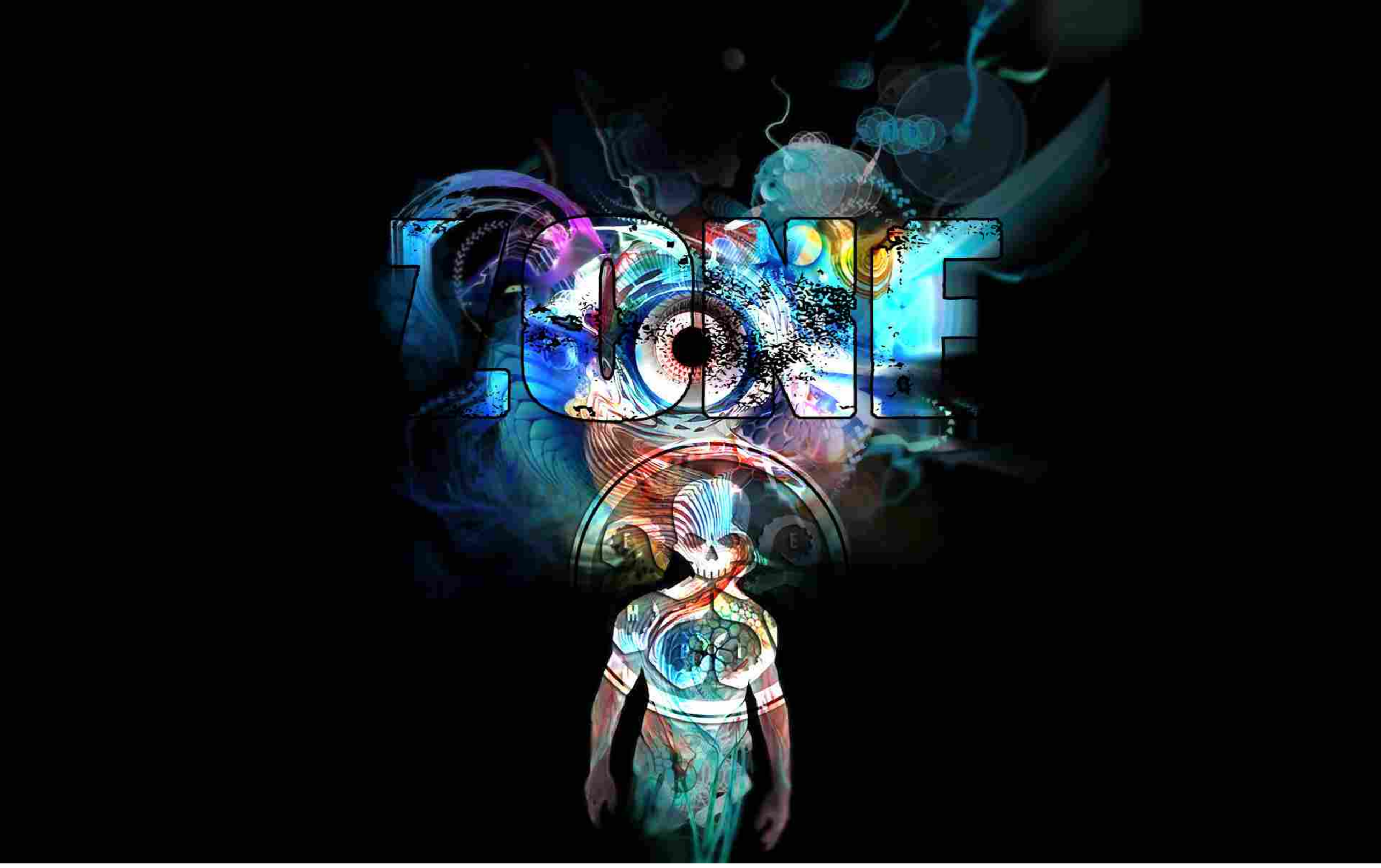
BA-BOOOOOM!

WELL...

THAT *IS* SOMETHING DIFFERENT.

NEW AVENGERS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